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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4088
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0591
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1427

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000906

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS, DS/IP/EAP, DS/DSS/IP, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/CC,
CA/OCS, EEB/TRA/AN, SINGAPORE FOR FAA

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TAGS: PTER CASC AEMR ASEC PGOV FAIR ID

SUBJECT: JAKARTA: EAC MEETING, MARCH 29, 2007

REF: SECSTATE 39366

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires a.i. John A. Heffern for Reasons: 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Embassy held an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting on March 29, 2007, to discuss the issues of airline safety in Indonesia and the recent arrest of 8 Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members in East Java. The CG and ECONCOUNS discussed a recent media release by the Indonesian Directorate General of Civil Aviation which rated whether Indonesian airlines had met minimal requirements of civil aviation regulations. The EAC agreed to revise the Aviation Safety portion of the Consular Information Sheet (CIS) and, when released by the Department, issue a Warden Message pointing out the dangers of airline travel in Indonesia. The RSO then briefed the EAC on the arrest of 8 members of JI who were found to have large quantities of weapons. End Summary

¶2. (U) In light of the January 1, 2007 Adam Air crash off the coast of Sulawesi; the February 21, 2007 Adam Air flight that was damaged upon landing in Surabaya; and the March 7, 2007 Garuda Airlines crash in Jogjakarta, airline safety has become a key issue in Indonesia. On March 22, 2007, the Indonesian Directorate General of Civil Aviation issued a media release outlining the results of an operational performance assessment on Indonesian commercial airlines which placed each in one of three performance categories based on whether they had met and implemented minimal requirements of civil aviation safety regulations. No airline had met the requirements of civil aviation safety regulations (Category I). Most of the larger airlines -- including Garuda -- had met minimal requirements, but some requirements had yet to be implemented (Category II). Several airlines -- including Adam Air -- had yet to implement minimal requirements, which "may reduce safety levels" (Category III). On March 27, the Australian Embassy in Jakarta issued a Travel Bulletin advising Australian citizens in Indonesia that Australian government officials have been advised to avoid flying on Category III airlines. However, the Ministry of Transportation has not released information on its methodology for the rating system, and some airline industry observers have questioned its validity.

¶3. (SBU) The EAC agreed that there are serious concerns about airline safety in Indonesia. However, prohibiting Embassy employees from using certain airlines is not a practical solution. Certain destinations in which the Embassy has important projects are serviced by only one or two airlines; banning travel on those airlines would render those destinations inaccessible. In addition, neither the Embassy nor any other independent organization in Indonesia has the capacity to assess the safety of individual

Indonesian air carriers. Further, road or sea travel is impractical and no safer than airline travel. The Embassy received reftel stating that the FAA will soon take action to revise Indonesia's safety oversight category from Category I to Category II.

¶4. (SBU) The EAC agreed to revise the Aviation Safety language in the CIS to state that Indonesian airlines do not meet international safety standards. American citizens should consider using non-Indonesian carriers as much as possible to fly directly to their destination in Indonesia and not transfer to a domestic airline once in Indonesia. The revised CIS would also note that Indonesia's own rating system has determined that no carriers fully meet international safety standards and give information on how American citizens could access that information. Once the CIS has been issued, the Management Section will advise the Embassy community and the Consular Section will publicize the CIS through a Warden Message that will highlight the aviation safety section.

¶5. (S) The RSO also briefed the EAC on the arrest of 8 JI members in East Java who possessed a stockpile of weapons and ammunition. The RSO reminded the EAC that JI is still lethal and is still targeting Western interests; the police have yet to capture Noordin Top or Abu Dujana. To date, evidence recovered in the police raids on JI safehouses does not indicate an imminent threat to US interests.

¶6. (C) The RSO also discussed a recent rash of bomb threats targeting the Embassy and other locations. He noted that all 22 were hoaxes. The RSO takes each bomb threat seriously and insists the police send an EOD team in each instance. Also, after every bomb threat, police and Embassy local guards

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thoroughly inspect the Embassy compound and perimeter.

¶7. (C) The EAC agreed that despite these arrests, the Embassy did not need to issue a Warden Message or heighten the Travel Warning.

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